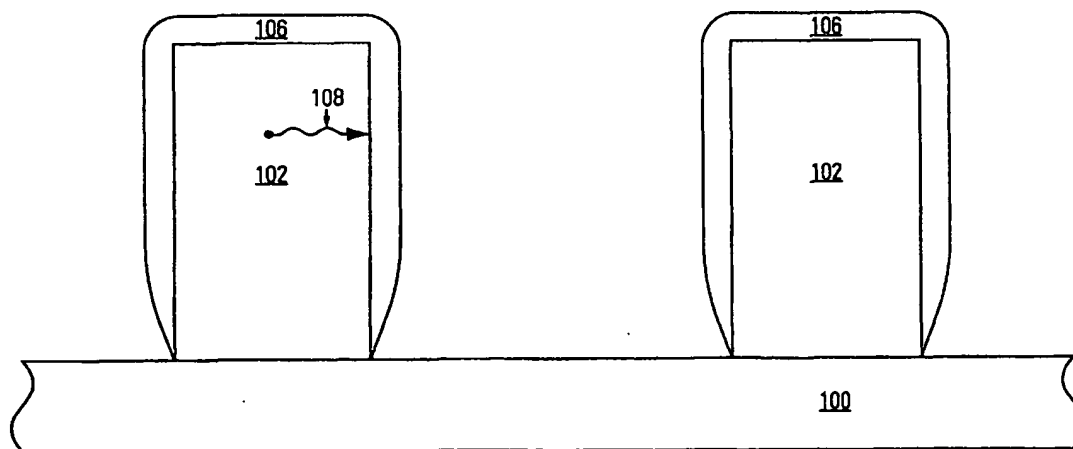




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(54) Title: DISPLAY WITH ENCAPSULATED MATRIX STRUCTURE



(57) Abstract

A flat panel display includes a faceplate (100), a polyimide matrix structure (102), and a contamination prevention structure (106).

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DISPLAY WITH ENCAPSULATED MATRIX STRUCTURE

5 FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present claimed invention relates to the field of flat panel displays. More particularly, the present claimed invention relates to the "black matrix" of a flat panel display screen structure. In one embodiment there is described encapsulated flat panel display components.

10 BACKGROUND ART

Sub-pixel regions on the faceplate of a flat panel display are typically separated by an opaque mesh-like structure commonly referred to as a matrix or "black matrix". By separating sub-pixel regions, the black matrix prevents electrons directed at one sub-pixel from being overlapping another sub-pixel. In so doing, a conventional black matrix helps maintain color purity in a flat panel display. In addition, the black matrix is also used as a base on which to locate structures such as, for example, support walls. In addition, if the black matrix is three dimensional (i.e. it extends above the level of the light emitting phosphors), then the black matrix can prevent some of the electrons back scattered from the phosphors of one sub-pixel from impinging on another, thereby improving color purity.

Polyimide material may be used to form the matrix. It is known that polyimide material contains numerous components such as nitrogen, hydrogen, carbon, and oxygen. While contained within the polyimide material, these aforementioned constituents do not negatively affect the vacuum environment of the flat panel display. Unfortunately, conventional polyimide matrices and the constituents thereof do not always remain confined within the polyimide material. That is, under certain

conditions, the polyimide constituents, and combinations thereof, are released from the polyimide material of the matrix. As a result, the vacuum environment of the flat panel display is compromised.

5 Polyimide (or other black matrix material) constituent contamination occurs in various ways. As an example, thermally treating or heating a conventional polyimide matrix can cause low molecular weight components (fragments, monomers or groups of monomers) of the polyimide material to migrate to the surface of the matrix. These low molecular weight components can then move out of the matrix and onto
10 the faceplate. When energetic electrons strike the contaminant-coated faceplate, polymerization of the contaminants can occur. This polymerization, in turn, results in the formation of a dark coating on the faceplate. The dark coating reduces brightness of the display thereby degrading overall performance of the flat panel display.

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In addition to thermally induced contamination, conventional polyimide matrices also suffer from electron stimulated desorption of contaminants. That is, during operation, a cathode portion of the flat panel display emits electrons which are directed towards sub-pixel regions on the faceplate. However, some of these emitted
20 electrons will eventually strike the matrix. This electron bombardment of the conventional polyimide matrix results in electron-stimulated desorption of contaminants (i.e. constituents or decomposition products of the polyimide matrix). These emitted contaminants arising from the polyimide matrix are then deleteriously introduced into the vacuum environment of the flat panel display. The contaminants
25 emitted into the vacuum environment degrade the vacuum, can induce sputtering, and may also coat the surface of the field emitters.

Furthermore, conventional polyimide matrices also suffer from X-ray stimulated desorption of contaminants. That is, during operation, X-rays (i.e. high energy photons) are generated by, for example, electrons striking the phosphors. Some of these generated X-rays will eventually strike the matrix. Such X-ray bombardment of the conventional polyimide matrix results in X-ray stimulated desorption of contaminants (i.e. constituents or decomposition products of the polyimide matrix). As described above, these emitted contaminants arising from the polyimide matrix are then deleteriously introduced into the vacuum environment of the flat panel display. Like electron stimulated contaminants, these constituents degrade the vacuum, can induce sputtering, and may also coat the surface of the field emitters.

The faceplate of a field emission cathode ray tube requires a conductive anode electrode to carry the current used to illuminate the display. A conductive black matrix structure also provides a uniform potential surface, reducing the likelihood of electrical arcing. Unfortunately, conventional polyimide matrices are not conductive. Therefore, local charging of the black matrix surface may occur and arcing may be induced between the cathode and a conventional matrix structure.

Thus, a need exists for a matrix structure which does not deleteriously outgas when subjected to thermal variations. Another need exists for a matrix structure which meets the above-listed need and which does not suffer from unwanted electron- or photon- stimulated desorption of contaminants. Finally, still another need exists for a matrix structure which meets both of the above needs and which also achieves electrical robustness in the faceplate by providing a constant potential surface, which reduces the possibility of arcing.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

The present invention provides a matrix structure which does not deleteriously outgas when subjected to thermal variations. The present invention also provides a matrix structure which meets the above-listed need and which does not suffer from unwanted electron stimulated desorption of contaminants. Finally, in another embodiment, the present invention provides a matrix structure which meets both of the above needs and which also achieves electrical robustness in the faceplate by providing a constant potential surface which reduces the possibility of potential arcing. Also, it will be understood that the conductive matrix structure of the present invention is applicable in numerous types of flat panel displays. The present invention achieves the above accomplishments with an encapsulated matrix structure.

Specifically, in one embodiment, the present invention is comprised of a matrix structure which is adapted to be coupled to a faceplate of a flat panel display. The matrix structure is located on the faceplate so as to separate adjacent sub-pixel regions. The present embodiment further includes a contaminant prevention structure which covers the matrix structure. The contaminant prevention structure of the present embodiment has a physical structure such that contaminants originating within the matrix structure are confined therein. Furthermore, the contaminant prevention structure of the present embodiment prevents electrons from penetrating therethrough. Hence, the present embodiment prevents electron stimulated desorption of contaminants from the matrix structure. In so doing, the present invention prevents deleterious thermally induced outgassing and electron stimulated desorption of contaminants by the matrix structure.

In yet another embodiment, the present invention includes the features of the above-described embodiment and further recites covering the contaminant prevention structure with a conductive coating. In the present embodiment, the conductive coating is comprised of a low atomic number material. For purposes of
5 the present application, a low atomic number material refers to a material comprised of elements having atomic numbers of less than 18. Additionally, a low atomic number material will reduce the electron scattering compared to a high atomic number material. By covering the contaminant prevention structure with a conductive coating, the present embodiment achieves additional electrical robustness
10 in the faceplate by providing a constant potential surface which reduces the possibility of potential arcing.

These and other objects and advantages of the present invention will no doubt become obvious to those of ordinary skill in the art after having read the following
15 detailed description of the preferred embodiments which are illustrated in the various drawing figures.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and form a part of this specification, illustrate embodiments of the invention and, together with the description, serve to explain the principles of the invention:

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FIGURE 1A is a perspective view of a faceplate of a flat panel display device having a matrix structure disposed thereon in accordance with one embodiment of the present claimed invention.

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FIGURE 1B is a perspective view of a support structure of a flat panel display device wherein the support structure is to be encapsulated in accordance with one embodiment of the present claimed invention.

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FIGURE 1C is a side sectional view of a focus structure of a flat panel display device wherein the focus structure is to be encapsulated in accordance with one embodiment of the present claimed invention.

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FIGURE 2 is a side sectional view of the faceplate and matrix structure of FIGURE 1A taken along line A-A wherein the matrix structure has a contaminant prevention structure disposed thereover in accordance with one embodiment of the present claimed invention.

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FIGURE 3 is a side sectional view of the faceplate and matrix structure of FIGURE 1A taken along line A-A wherein the matrix structure has a multi-layer contaminant prevention structure disposed thereover in accordance with one embodiment of the present claimed invention.

FIGURE 4 is a side sectional view of a contaminant prevention structure disposed covering a matrix structure and the sub-pixel regions of a faceplate in accordance with one embodiment of the present claimed invention.

5 FIGURE 5A is a side sectional view of the faceplate and matrix structure of FIGURE 2 having a conductive coating disposed thereover in accordance with one embodiment of the present claimed invention.

10 FIGURE 5B is a side sectional view of the faceplate and matrix structure of FIGURE 3 having a conductive coating disposed thereover in accordance with one embodiment of the present claimed invention.

15 FIGURE 5C is a side sectional view of the faceplate and matrix structure of FIGURE 4 having a conductive coating disposed thereover in accordance with one embodiment of the present claimed invention.

20 FIGURE 6A is a side sectional view of the faceplate and matrix structure of FIGURE 1A taken along line A-A wherein the matrix structure has a contaminant prevention structure comprised of a porous material disposed thereover in accordance with one embodiment of the present claimed invention.

25 FIGURE 6B is a side sectional view of the faceplate and matrix structure of FIGURE 1A taken along line A-A wherein the matrix structure has a contaminant prevention structure comprised of a plurality of layers of porous material disposed thereover in accordance with one embodiment of the present claimed invention.

FIGURE 6C is a side sectional view of the faceplate and matrix structure of FIGURE 6B having a conductive coating disposed thereover in accordance with one embodiment of the present claimed invention.

5 FIGURE 7A is a side sectional view of the faceplate and matrix structure of FIGURE 1A taken along line A-A wherein the matrix structure has a contaminant prevention structure comprised of a layer of porous material and a layer of non-porous material disposed thereover in accordance with one embodiment of the present claimed invention.

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FIGURE 7B is a side sectional view of the faceplate and matrix structure of FIGURE 7A having a conductive coating disposed thereover in accordance with one embodiment of the present claimed invention.

15 FIGURE 8 is a side sectional view of the faceplate and matrix structure wherein the matrix structure has a dye-containing contaminant prevention structure disposed thereover in accordance with one embodiment of the present claimed invention.

20 The drawings referred to in this description should be understood as not being drawn to scale except if specifically noted.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Reference will now be made in detail to the preferred embodiments of the invention, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. While the invention will be described in conjunction with the preferred embodiments, it will be understood that they are not intended to limit the invention to these embodiments. On the contrary, the invention is intended to cover alternatives, modifications and equivalents, which may be included within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims. Furthermore, in the following detailed description of the present invention, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. However, it will be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that the present invention may be practiced without these specific details. In other instances, well known methods, procedures, and components have not been described in detail so as not to unnecessarily obscure aspects of the present invention.

With reference now to Figure 1A, a first step used by the present embodiment in the formation of an encapsulated matrix is shown. More specifically, Figure 1A shows a perspective view of a faceplate 100 of a flat panel display device having a matrix structure 102 coupled thereto. In the embodiment of Figure 1A, matrix structure 102 is located on faceplate 100 such that the row and columns of matrix structure 102 separate adjacent sub-pixel regions, typically shown as 104. Additionally, in the present embodiment, matrix structure 102 is formed of polyimide material. Although matrix structure 102 is formed of polyimide material in the present embodiment, the present invention is also well suited to use with various other matrix forming materials which may cause deleterious contamination. As an example, the present invention is also well suited for use with a matrix structure

which is comprised of a photosensitive polyimide formulation containing components other than polyimide.

With reference still to Figure 1A, matrix structure 102 is a "multi-level" matrix structure. That is, the rows of matrix structure 102 have a different height than the columns of matrix structure 102. Such a multi-level matrix structure is shown in the embodiment of Figure 1A in order to more clearly show sub-pixel regions 104. The present invention is, however, well suited to use with a matrix structure which is not multi-level. Although the matrix structure of the present invention is sometimes referred to as a black matrix, it will be understood that the term "black" refers to the opaque characteristic of the matrix structure. That is, the present invention is also well suited to having a color other than black. Furthermore, in the following Figures, only a portion of the interior surface of a faceplate is shown for purposes of clarity. Additionally, the following discussion specifically refers to a black matrix which is encapsulated by a contaminant prevention structure. Although such a specific recitation is found below, the present invention is also well suited for use with various other physical components of a flat panel display device. Also, although some embodiments of the present invention refer to a matrix structure for defining pixel and/or sub-pixel regions of the flat panel display, the present invention is also well suited to an embodiment in which the pixel/sub-pixel defining structure is not a "matrix" structure. Therefore, for purposes of the present application, the term matrix structure refers to a pixel and/or sub-pixel defining structure and not to a particular physical shape of the structure.

Referring now to Figure 1B, a perspective view of a support structure 150 adapted to be encapsulated by a contaminant prevention structure in accordance with one embodiment of the present claimed invention is shown. As will be described

below, in great detail, in conjunction with a matrix structure embodiment, in the present embodiment support structure 150 is encapsulated by a contaminant prevention structure. That is, the contaminant prevention structure has a physical structure such that contaminants originating within support structure 150 are
5 confined within support structure 150. Thus, the contaminant prevention structure prevents contaminants which are generated within support structure 150 from migrating outside of support structure 150. In addition to confining contaminants within support structure 150, the material comprising the contaminant prevention structure of the present invention does not outgas contaminants when struck by
10 electrons emitted from a cathode portion of the flat panel display. Although support structure 150 is a wall in the embodiment of Figure 1B, the present invention is also well suited to an embodiment in which the support structure is comprised, for example, of pins, balls, columns, or various other supporting structures.

15 Referring now to Figure 1C, a side sectional view of a focus structure 160 adapted to be encapsulated by a contaminant prevention structure in accordance with one embodiment of the present claimed invention is shown. As will be described below, in great detail, in conjunction with a matrix structure embodiment, in the present embodiment focus structure 160 is encapsulated by a contaminant
20 prevention structure. That is, the contaminant prevention structure has a physical structure such that contaminants originating within focus structure 160 are confined within focus structure 160. Thus, the contaminant prevention structure prevents contaminants which are generated within focus structure 160 from migrating outside of focus structure 160. In addition to confining contaminants within focus structure
25 160, the material comprising the contaminant prevention structure of the present invention does not outgas contaminants when struck by electrons emitted from a cathode portion of the flat panel display. Although focus structure 160 is a waffle-like

structure in the embodiment of Figure 1C, the present invention is also well suited to an embodiment in which the focus structure has a different shape.

Referring next to Figure 2, a side sectional view of faceplate 100 and matrix structure 102 taken along line A-A of Figure 1A is shown. In the side sectional view, only a portion of matrix structure 102 is shown for purposes of clarity. It will be understood, however, that the following steps are performed over a much larger portion of matrix structure 102 and are not limited only to those portion of matrix structure 102 shown in Figure 2. Additionally, the following steps used in the formation of the present invention are also well suited to an approach in which a preliminary bake-out step is used to initially purge some of the contaminants from the matrix. In a bake-out step, the polyimide matrix is heated prior to placing the polyimide matrix in the sealed vacuum environment of the flat panel display.

Referring again to Figure 2, in one embodiment of the present invention, a contaminant prevention structure 106 is disposed covering matrix structure 102. In this embodiment, contaminant prevention structure 106 is comprised of a layer of substantially non-porous material. That is, matrix structure 102 has a physical structure such that contaminants originating within matrix structure 102 are confined within matrix structure 102. Thus, contaminant prevention structure 106 prevents contaminants which are generated within matrix structure 102 from migrating outside of matrix structure 102. In addition to confining contaminants within matrix structure 102, the material comprising contaminant prevention structure 106 of the present invention does not outgas contaminants when struck by electrons emitted from a cathode portion of the flat panel display.

With reference again to Figure 2, arrow 108 depicts the path of a contaminant generated within matrix structure 102. It will be understood that such contaminants include species such as, for example, N₂, H₂, CH₄, CO, CO₂, O₂, and H₂O. As shown by arrow 108, contaminant prevention structure 106 prevents contaminants from
5 being emitted from matrix structure 102.

With reference still to Figure 2, as stated above, in the present embodiment, contaminant prevention structure 106 is comprised of a substantially non-porous material. In one embodiment, the substantially non-porous material of contaminant
10 prevention structure 106 is selected from the group consisting of: silicon oxide, a metal film, an inorganic solid, and the like. The present embodiment is also well suited to the use of material such as aluminum, beryllium, and chemical vapor deposited silicon oxide for non-porous prevention structure 106. Moreover, the present invention is well suited to an embodiment in which the material of non-porous
15 prevention structure 106 is a solid with a melting point of greater than approximately 500 degrees Celsius. In one embodiment, the substantially non-porous material is deposited over matrix structure 102 by chemical vapor deposition (CVD), evaporation, sputtering, or other means, to a thickness of approximately 500-5000 angstroms. It will be understood, however, that the present invention is well suited to
20 the use of various other substantially non-porous materials which are suited to confining contaminants within matrix structure 102. The present invention is also well suited to varying the thickness of contaminant prevention structure 106 to greater than or less than the thickness range listed above.

25 With reference still to Figure 2, in one embodiment of the present invention, contaminant prevention structure 106 has a thickness which is sufficient to prevent penetration by electrons directed towards faceplate 100. In one such embodiment,

contaminant prevention structure 106 is comprised of a layer of silicon dioxide deposited covering matrix 102 by CVD, evaporation, sputtering, or other means, to a thickness of approximately 1000-5000 angstroms. As a result, such an embodiment confines thermally generated contaminants within or on the surface of matrix structure 102, and further prevents contaminants from being formed by electron stimulated desorption. That is, the present embodiment substantially eliminates a major deleterious condition associated with electron bombardment of matrix structure 102. In one such embodiment in which the contaminant prevention structure prevents penetration therethrough by electrons, the contaminant prevention structure does not hermetically seal the underlying component.

With reference next to Figure 3, in the present embodiment, a multi-layer contaminant prevention structure is disposed covering matrix structure 102. In this embodiment, the multi-layer contaminant prevention structure is comprised of a plurality of layers, 106 and 110, of substantially non-porous material. That is, matrix structure 102 has a physical structure such that contaminants originating within matrix structure 102 are confined within matrix structure 102. Thus, the present multi-layer contaminant prevention structure prevents contaminants which are generated within matrix structure 102 from migrating outside of matrix structure 102. In addition to confining contaminants within matrix structure 102, layers 106 and 110 comprising the multi-layer contaminant prevention structure of the present invention do not outgas contaminants when struck by electrons emitted from a cathode portion of the flat panel display.

As in the above-described embodiment, arrow 108 depicts the path of a contaminant generated within matrix structure 102. It will be understood that such contaminants include species such as, for example, N₂, H₂, CH₄, CO, CO₂, O₂, and

H₂O. As shown by arrow 108, the present multi-layer contaminant prevention structure prevents contaminants from being emitted from matrix structure 102.

With reference still to Figure 3, as stated above, in the present embodiment,

5 multi-layer contaminant prevention structure is comprised of a plurality of layers of substantially non-porous material. In one embodiment, at least one of the substantially non-porous layers of material, 106 and 110, of the multi-layer contaminant prevention structure is selected from the group consisting of: silicon dioxide; a metal film; an inorganic solid, and the like. The present embodiment is also

10 well suited to the use of material such as aluminum, beryllium, and chemical vapor deposited silicon oxide for at least one of the substantially non-porous layers of material 106 and 110. Moreover, the present invention is well suited to an embodiment in which at least one of the non-porous layers of material 106 and 110 is comprised of a solid with a melting point of greater than approximately 500 degrees

15 Celsius. In one embodiment, at least one of layers 106 and 110 is deposited over matrix structure 102 by chemical vapor deposition (CVD), evaporation, sputtering, or other means. In this embodiment, the multi-layer contaminant prevention structure has a total thickness of approximately 500-5000 angstroms. It will be understood, however, that the present invention is well suited to the use of various other

20 substantially non-porous materials which are suited to confining contaminants within matrix structure 102. The present invention is also well suited to varying the total thickness of the multi-layer contaminant prevention structure to greater than or less than the thickness range listed above. Furthermore, the present invention is also well suited to varying the number of layers of substantially non-porous material

25 which comprise the multi-layer contaminant prevention structure.

In this embodiment, the multi-layer contaminant prevention structure has a thickness which is sufficient to prevent penetration by electrons directed towards faceplate 100. In one such embodiment, the multi-layer contaminant prevention structure includes a layer of silicon dioxide deposited covering matrix 102 by CVD to a thickness of approximately 1000-5000 angstroms. As a result, such an embodiment confines thermally generated contaminants within matrix structure 102, and further prevents contaminants from being formed by electron stimulated desorption. That is, the present embodiment substantially eliminates a major deleterious condition associated with electron bombardment of matrix structure 102.

Referring now to Figure 4, in the present embodiment, a contaminant prevention structure 112 is disposed covering matrix structure 102 and the sub-pixel regions 114 of faceplate 100. In this embodiment, the substantially non-porous material is a transparent material such as silicon dioxide or indium tin oxide which is deposited over matrix structure 102 and sub-pixel regions 114 by chemical vapor deposition (CVD), evaporation, sputtering, or other means, to a thickness of approximately 500-5000 angstroms. Although contaminant prevention structure 112 extends into sub-pixel regions 114, the presence of the silicon dioxide material in sub-pixel regions 114 does not adversely affect the formation or operation of the flat panel display. It will be understood, however, that the present invention is well suited to the use of various other substantially non-porous materials which are suited to confining contaminants within matrix structure 102 and which do not adversely affect the formation or operation of the flat panel display. The present invention is also well suited to varying the thickness of contaminant prevention structure 112 to greater than or less than the thickness range listed above.

In the embodiment of Figure 4, the contaminant prevention structure 112 has a thickness which is sufficient to prevent penetration by electrons directed towards faceplate 100. Thus, as in the previously described embodiments, the present embodiment confines thermally generated contaminants within matrix structure 102, and further prevents contaminants from being formed by electron stimulated desorption. That is, the present embodiment substantially eliminates a major deleterious condition associated with electron bombardment of matrix structure 102.

With reference now to Figure 5A, another embodiment of the present invention is shown in which a conductive coating 116 is disposed covering a contaminant prevention structure 106. (The present embodiment depicts the embodiment of Figure 2, having conductive coating 116 disposed thereover.) In the present embodiment, conductive coating is preferably comprised of a low atomic number material. For purposes of the present application, a low atomic number material refers to a material comprised of elements having atomic numbers of less than 18. Additionally, a low atomic number material will reduce the electron scattering compared to a high atomic number material. More specifically, in one embodiment, conductive coating 116 is comprised, for example, of a CB800A DAG made by Acheson Colloids of Port Huron, Michigan. In another embodiment, conductive coating 116 is comprised of a graphite-based conductive material. In still another embodiment, the layer of graphite-based conductive material is applied as a semi-dry spray to reduce shrinkage of conductive coating 116. In so doing, the present invention allows for improved control over the final depth of conductive coating 116. Although such deposition methods are recited above, it will be understood that the present invention is also well suited to using various other deposition methods to deposit various other conductive coatings over contaminant prevention structure

106. For example, the present invention is also well suited to the use of an aluminum coating which is applied by an angled evaporation.

As mentioned above, the top surface of matrix structure 102 is physically closer to the field emitter than is faceplate 100. By applying conductive coating 116 over the top surface of matrix structure 102, the present embodiment provides a constant potential surface. By providing a constant potential surface, the present embodiment reduces the possibility of potential arcing. As result, the present embodiment helps to ensure that the integrity of the phosphors and the overlying aluminum layer (not yet deposited in the embodiment of Figure 5A) is maintained. In addition, the conductive encapsulating layer can be made more electrically or thermally conductive than the aluminum layer over the phosphor by making it thicker or of a more conductive material, thereby enabling the encapsulating material to readily prevent localized voltage spikes by carrying off high electrical currents of potential arcs and to better physically withstand any arcs that may occur. Furthermore, the conductive coating can be a single layer (as in Figure 2) on the black matrix and need not be a double layer as drawn.

With reference now to Figure 5B, another embodiment of the present invention is shown in which a conductive coating 116 is disposed covering layers 106 and 110 of a multi-layer contaminant prevention structure. (The present embodiment depicts the embodiment of Figure 3, having conductive coating 116 disposed thereover.) In the present embodiment, conductive coating is preferably comprised of a low atomic number material, or a material comprised predominantly of low atomic number elements. For purposes of the present application, a low atomic number material refers to a material comprised of elements having atomic numbers of less than 18. Although such a definition is recited herein, the present application is also well suited

to an embodiment in which the conductive coating is not comprised of a low atomic number material. More specifically, in one embodiment, conductive coating 116 is comprised, for example, of a CB800A DAG made by Acheson Colloids of Port Huron, Michigan. In another embodiment, conductive coating 116 is comprised of a graphite-based conductive material. In still another embodiment, the layer of graphite-based conductive material is applied as a semi-dry spray to reduce shrinkage of conductive coating 116. In so doing, the present invention allows for improved control over the final depth of conductive coating 116. Although such deposition methods are recited above, it will be understood that the present invention is also well suited to using various other deposition methods to deposit various other conductive coatings over layers 106 and 110 of the multi-layer contaminant prevention structure. For example, the present invention is also well suited to the use of an aluminum coating which is applied by an angled evaporation.

For the reasons set forth in detail above, the present embodiment provides a constant potential surface and decreases the chances that any electrical arcing will occur. As result, the present embodiment helps to ensure that the integrity of the phosphors and the overlying aluminum layer (not yet deposited in the embodiment of Figure 5B) is maintained.

With reference now to Figure 5C, another embodiment of the present invention is shown in which a conductive coating 116 is disposed over contaminant prevention structure 112. (The present embodiment depicts the embodiment of Figure 4, having conductive coating 116 disposed thereover.) In the present embodiment, conductive coating is preferably comprised of a low atomic number material. More specifically, in one embodiment, conductive coating 116 is comprised, for example, of a CB800A DAG made by Acheson Colloids of Port Huron, Michigan. In another embodiment,

conductive coating 116 is comprised of a graphite-based conductive material. In still another embodiment, the layer of graphite-based conductive material is applied as a semi-dry spray to reduce shrinkage of conductive coating 116. In so doing, the present invention allows for improved control over the final depth of conductive coating 116. Although such deposition methods are recited above, it will be understood that the present invention is also well suited to using various other deposition methods to deposit various other conductive coatings over contaminant prevention structure 112. For example, the present invention is also well suited to the use of an aluminum coating which is applied by an angled evaporation.

For the reasons set forth in detail above, the present embodiment provides a constant potential surface and decreases the chances that any electrical arcing will occur. As result, the present embodiment helps to ensure that the integrity of the phosphors and the overlying aluminum layer (not yet deposited in the embodiment of Figure 5C) is maintained.

The above-described embodiments of the present invention have several substantial benefits associated therewith. For example, the present invention eliminates deleterious browning and outgassing associated with prior art polyimide based black matrix structures. Additionally, by preventing contaminants from being emitted by the matrix structure, the present invention prevents coating of the field emitters by the released contaminants. Additionally, by reducing the number and energy of electrons striking the polyimide, electron desorption of contaminants is reduced. As a result, the present invention extends the life of the field emitters. As yet an additional advantage, the contaminant prevention structure of the present invention also protects the matrix structure from potential damage during subsequent processing steps, and electrical arcs.

Referring next to Figure 6A, a side sectional view of faceplate 100 and matrix structure 102 taken along line A-A of Figure 1A is shown. As mentioned above, matrix structure 102 is formed of polyimide material in the present embodiment. The present invention is also well suited to use with various other matrix forming materials which may cause deleterious contamination. As an example, the present invention is also well suited for use with a matrix structure which is comprised of a photosensitive polyimide formulation containing components other than polyimide. Additionally, the present invention is also well suited for use with various other physical components such as, for example, support structures and/or focus structures.

Referring still to Figure 6A, in this embodiment of the present invention, a contaminant prevention structure 602 is disposed covering matrix structure 102 and the sub-pixel regions 114 of faceplate 100. Although contaminant prevention structure 602 extends into sub-pixel or pixel regions 114, the presence of the transparent porous or non-porous material in sub-pixel or pixel regions 114 does not adversely affect the formation or operation of the flat panel display. It will be understood, however, that the present invention is well suited to an embodiment in which the porous material of contaminant prevention structure 602 does not extend into sub pixel regions 114. In this embodiment, contaminant prevention structure 106 is comprised of a layer of porous material. In this embodiment, the porous material comprising contaminant prevention structure 602 prevents electrons and X-rays generated within the flat panel display from striking matrix structure 102. Additionally, the material comprising contaminant prevention structure 602 of the present invention does not outgas contaminants when struck by electrons or X-rays

generated within the flat panel display. It will be understood that such contaminants include species such as, for example, N₂, H₂, CH₄, CO, CO₂, O₂, and H₂O.

With reference still to Figure 6A, as stated above, in the present embodiment, contaminant prevention structure 602 is comprised of a porous material. In one embodiment, the porous material of contaminant prevention structure 602 is selected from the group consisting of: colloidal silica; silicon oxide; and chemical vapor deposited silicon oxide. It will be understood, however, that the present invention is also well suited to use with various other porous materials such as, for example, silicon, oxides, nitrides, carbides, diamond, and the like. Moreover, the present invention is well suited to an embodiment in which the material of porous contaminant prevention structure 602 is a solid with a melting point of greater than approximately 500 degrees Celsius.

Referring again to Figure 6A, in one embodiment, the porous material is silicon dioxide which is deposited over matrix structure 102 by atmospheric pressure physical vapor deposition (APPVD) to a thickness of approximately 300-10,000 angstroms. It will be understood, however, that the present invention is well suited to the use of various other porous materials which are suited to preventing electron and/or X-ray penetration therethrough by electrons and/or X-rays generated in the flat panel display. The present invention is also well suited to an embodiment in which the layer of porous material is applied, for example, by sputtering, e-beam evaporation, spraying methods, dip-coating methods, and the like. The present invention is also well suited to varying the thickness of contaminant prevention structure 602 to greater than or less than the thickness range listed above. More specifically, at 6 keV, the vast majority of electrons will not penetrate farther than 6000 angstroms into silicon dioxide. At 10 keV, the vast majority of electrons will not

penetrate farther than 10,000 angstroms into silicon dioxide. Therefore, in the present embodiment, the depth of the porous material comprising contaminant prevention structure 602 is adjusted so as to ensure that matrix structure 102 is not bombarded by electrons and/or X-rays generated within the flat panel display.

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With reference next to Figure 6B, in the present embodiment, a multi-layer contaminant prevention structure is disposed covering matrix structure 102. In this embodiment, the multi-layer contaminant prevention structure is comprised of a plurality of layers, 602 and 604, of porous material. As in the embodiment of Figure 6A, the present embodiment prevents electrons and X-rays generated within the flat panel display from striking matrix structure 102. Additionally, the material comprising the contaminant prevention structure of the present invention does not outgas contaminants when struck by electrons or X-rays generated within the flat panel display.

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With reference still to Figure 6B, as stated above, in the present embodiment, multi-layer contaminant prevention structure is comprised of a plurality of layers of porous material. In one embodiment, at least one of the layers of porous material, 602 and 604, of the multi-layer contaminant prevention structure is selected from the group consisting of: colloidal silica; silicon oxide; and chemical vapor deposited silicon oxide. It will be understood, however, that the present invention is also well suited to use with various other porous materials such as, for example, silicon, oxides, nitrides, carbides, graphite, aluminum, diamond, and the like. Moreover, the present invention is well suited to an embodiment in which at least one of the layers of porous material 602 and 604 is a solid with a melting point of greater than approximately 500 degrees Celsius.

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Referring again to Figure 6B, in one embodiment, the porous material of at least one of layers 602 and 604 is silicon dioxide which is deposited over matrix structure 102 by atmospheric pressure physical vapor deposition (APPVD) to a thickness of approximately 300-10,000 angstroms. It will be understood, however, that the present invention is well suited to the use of various other porous materials which are suited to preventing electron and/or X-ray penetration therethrough by electrons and/or X-rays generated in the flat panel display. The present invention is also well suited to an embodiment in which the layer of porous material is applied, for example, by sputtering, e-beam evaporation, spraying methods, dip-coating methods, and the like. The present invention is also well suited to varying the thickness of contaminant prevention structure to greater than or less than the thickness range listed above. In the present embodiment, the combined depth of the layers of porous material 602 and 604 comprising the contaminant prevention structure is adjusted so as to ensure that matrix structure 102 is not bombarded by electrons and/or X-rays generated within the flat panel display.

With reference now to Figure 6C, another embodiment of the present invention is shown in which a conductive coating 606 is disposed over a contaminant prevention structure. The present embodiment depicts the embodiment of Figure 6B having conductive coating 606 disposed thereover. The present invention is, however, well suited to an embodiment in which conductive coating 606 is disposed over, for example, the embodiment of Figure 6A. In the present embodiment, conductive coating is preferably comprised of a low atomic number material. More specifically, in one embodiment, conductive coating 606 is comprised, for example, of a CB800A DAG made by Acheson Colloids of Port Huron, Michigan. In another embodiment, conductive coating 606 is comprised of a graphite-based conductive material. In still another embodiment, the layer of graphite-based conductive material is applied as a

semi-dry spray to reduce shrinkage of conductive coating 606. In so doing, the present invention allows for improved control over the final depth of conductive coating 606. Although such deposition methods are recited above, it will be understood that the present invention is also well suited to using various other deposition methods to deposit various other conductive coatings (e.g. aluminum) over the contaminant prevention structure. Additionally, in the present embodiment, conductive coating 606 is deposited to a depth of 1000-5000 angstroms.

For the reasons set forth in detail above, the present embodiment provides a constant potential surface and decreases the chances that any electrical arcing will occur. As result, the present embodiment helps to ensure that the integrity of the phosphors and the overlying aluminum layer (not yet deposited in the embodiment of Figure 6C) is maintained.

With reference next to Figure 7A, in the present embodiment, a multi-layer contaminant prevention structure is disposed covering matrix structure 102. In this embodiment, the multi-layer contaminant prevention structure is comprised of a plurality of layers, 702 and 704. In this embodiment, layer 702 is comprised of a porous material, while layer 704 is comprised of a layer of substantially non-porous material. As in the embodiment of Figure 6A, the present embodiment prevents electrons and X-rays generated within the flat panel display from striking matrix structure 102. This embodiment further confines thermally generated contaminants within matrix structure 102. Additionally, the material comprising the contaminant prevention structure of the present invention does not outgas contaminants when struck by electrons or X-rays generated within the flat panel display.

With reference still to Figure 7A, as stated above, in the present embodiment, the multi-layer contaminant prevention structure is comprised of a plurality of layers of material. In one embodiment, porous material, 702 of the multi-layer contaminant prevention structure is selected from the group consisting of: colloidal silica; silicon
5 oxide; and chemical vapor deposited silicon oxide. It will be understood, however, that the present invention is also well suited to use with various other porous materials such as, for example, silicon, oxides, nitrides, carbides, diamond, and the like. Moreover, the present invention is well suited to an embodiment in which at least one of the layers of material 702 and 704 is a solid with a melting point of greater than
10 approximately 500 degrees Celsius.

Referring again to Figure 7A, in one embodiment, the plurality of layers of material are defined as follows. Layer 702 is comprised of a layer of indium tin oxide which is deposited to a depth of approximately 1000-10,000 angstroms. Layer 704 is
15 comprised of a silicon oxide which is deposited over matrix structure 102 to a thickness of approximately 300-10,000 angstroms. It will be understood, however, that the present invention is well suited to the use of various other porous and non-porous materials. The present invention is also well suited to an embodiment in which the layer of porous material is applied, for example, by sputtering, e-beam
20 evaporation, spraying methods, dip-coating methods, and the like. The present invention is also well suited to varying the thickness of the contaminant prevention structure to greater than or less than the thickness range listed above. In the present embodiment, the combined depth of the layers of material 702 and 704 comprising the contaminant prevention structure is adjusted so as to ensure that
25 matrix structure 102 is not bombarded by electrons and/or X-rays generated within the flat panel display.

With reference now to Figure 7B, another embodiment of the present invention is shown in which a conductive coating 706 is disposed over a contaminant prevention structure. The present embodiment depicts the embodiment of Figure 7A having conductive coating 706 disposed thereover. Specifically, in such an embodiment, layer 702 is comprised of a layer of indium tin oxide which is deposited to a depth of approximately 1000-10,000 angstroms. Layer 704 is comprised of a silicon oxide which is deposited over matrix structure 102 to a thickness of approximately 300-10,000 angstroms. Layer 706 of this embodiment is comprised of a layer of aluminum which is deposited to a depth of approximately 300-2000 angstroms. In the present embodiment, the conductive coating is preferably comprised of a low atomic number material. More specifically, in one embodiment, conductive coating 606 is comprised, for example, of a CB800A DAG made by Acheson Colloids of Port Huron, Michigan. In another embodiment, conductive coating 606 is comprised of a graphite-based conductive material. In still another embodiment, the layer of graphite-based conductive material is applied as a semi-dry spray to reduce shrinkage of conductive coating 606. In so doing, the present invention allows for improved control over the final depth of conductive coating 606. Although such deposition methods are recited above, it will be understood that the present invention is also well suited to using various other deposition methods to deposit various other conductive coatings (e.g. aluminum) over the contaminant prevention structure.

Referring still to Figure 7B, in the present embodiment, the contaminant structure is comprised of two distinct layers of material 702 and 704. In another embodiment, however, the contaminant prevention structure is comprised of a layer of porous material (e.g. layer 704 of silicon oxide) having non-porous material (e.g. the indium tin oxide of layer 702) impregnated therein. That is, the present invention is also well suited to an embodiment in which a layer of substantially porous material

has substantially non-porous material impregnated therein. In one such embodiment, the layer of substantially porous material is deposited as is described above in detail. Additionally, the substantially non-porous material is impregnated within the layer of substantially non-porous material by, for example, sputtering, physical vapor deposition, and the like. Furthermore, the present embodiment is also well suited to having a conductive coating disposed thereover as is describe above in great detail.

Referring now to Figure 8, a side sectional view of faceplate 100 and matrix structure 102 taken along line A-A of Figure 1A is shown. As mentioned above, matrix structure 102 is formed of polyimide material in the present embodiment. The present invention is also well suited to use with various other matrix forming materials which may cause deleterious contamination. As an example, the present invention is also well suited for use with a matrix structure which is comprised of a photosensitive polyimide formulation containing components other than polyimide. Additionally, the present invention is also well suited for use with various other physical components such as, for example, support structures and/or focus structures. In this embodiment, contaminant prevention structure 802 is disposed over matrix structure 102 and into sub-pixel regions 114. Contaminant prevention structure 802 further includes a dye (typically shown as dye particles 804). In one such embodiment, contaminant prevention structure 802 is comprised of silicon oxide doped with dye material. In so doing, the present embodiment provides a color filter which enhances display contrast by reducing reflected ambient light. Also, the present embodiment is well suited to having the dye disposed only in those portions of contaminant prevention structure 802 which reside above sub-pixel regions 114. The present embodiment is also well suited to having the dye disposed in the entire contaminant prevention structure 802.

For the reasons set forth in detail above, the present embodiment provides a constant potential surface and decreases the chances that any electrical arcing will occur. As result, the present embodiment helps to ensure that the integrity of the phosphors and the overlying aluminum layer (not yet deposited in the embodiment of Figure 7B) is maintained.

Thus, in one embodiment, the present invention provides a matrix structure which does not deleteriously outgas when subjected to thermal variations. The present invention also provides an embodiment in which a matrix structure meets the above-listed need and which reduces unwanted electron stimulated desorption of contaminants. Finally, in another embodiment, the present invention provides a matrix structure which meets both of the above needs and which also achieves electrical robustness in the faceplate by providing a constant potential surface which reduces the possibility of potential arcing. Also, it will be understood that the conductive matrix structure of the present invention is applicable in numerous types of flat panel displays.

The foregoing descriptions of specific embodiments of the present invention have been presented for purposes of illustration and description. They are not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise forms disclosed, and obviously many modifications and variations are possible in light of the above teaching. The embodiments were chosen and described in order best to explain the principles of the invention and its practical application, to thereby enable others skilled in the art best to utilize the invention and various embodiments with various modifications suited to the particular use contemplated. It is intended that the scope of the invention be defined by the Claims appended hereto and their equivalents.

Claims

1. An encapsulated matrix structure or device comprising:
 - a) a physical component that is a matrix structure adapted to be coupled to a faceplate of a flat panel display; and
 - b) a contaminant prevention structure disposed covering said matrix structure.
2. The structure of claim 1 wherein said contaminant prevention structure has a physical structure such that contaminants originating within said matrix structure are confined therein, said matrix structure being for defining rows and columns of sub-pixels on a faceplate of a flat panel display device.
3. The encapsulated matrix structure of claim 1 or 2 wherein said contaminant prevention structure has a thickness sufficient such that the underlying matrix structure does not undergo decomposition when the encapsulated matrix structure is impinged by electrons.
4. The matrix of claim 1 wherein said contaminant prevention structure has a physical structure such that contaminants originating within said matrix structure are confined therein; said matrix structure further having
 - c) a conductive coating disposed covering said contaminant prevention structure, wherein the matrix structure is for preventing contamination caused by thermally induced outgassing and electron stimulated desorption of contaminants.
5. The encapsulated matrix structure of claim 1, 2 or 4 wherein said contaminant prevention structure has a thickness sufficient to prevent penetration therethrough by electrons emitted from a cathode portion of said flat panel display.

6. The encapsulated matrix structure of claim 1, 2 or 4 wherein said contaminant prevention structure does not outgas contaminants when struck by electrons emitted from a cathode portion of said flat panel display.

7. A method for preventing thermally induced outgassing and electron stimulated desorption of contaminants from a matrix structure in a flat panel display device, said method comprising the step of:

a) covering a matrix structure, adapted to be coupled to a faceplate of a flat panel display, with a contaminant prevention structure, said contaminant prevention structure confining contaminants originating within said matrix structure therein.

8. The method for preventing thermally induced outgassing and electron stimulated desorption of contaminants from a matrix structure in a flat panel display device encapsulated matrix structure as recited in claim 7 wherein step a) comprises:

covering a polyimide-based matrix structure, adapted to be coupled to faceplate of a flat panel display, with said contaminant prevention structure.

9. The method for preventing thermally induced outgassing and electron stimulated desorption of contaminants from a matrix structure in a flat panel display device as recited in claim 7 wherein step a) comprises:

covering said matrix structure with a layer of substantially non-porous material.

10. The method for preventing thermally induced outgassing and electron stimulated desorption of contaminants from a matrix structure in a flat panel display device as recited in claim 9 wherein said substantially non-porous material is selected from the group consisting of : silicon oxide; a metal film; and an inorganic solid.

11. The method for preventing thermally induced outgassing and electron stimulated desorption of contaminants from a matrix structure in a flat panel display device as recited in claim 7 wherein step a) comprises:

covering said matrix structure with a plurality of layers of substantially non-porous material.

12. The method for preventing thermally induced outgassing and electron stimulated desorption of contaminants from a matrix structure in a flat panel display device as recited in claim 11 wherein at least one of said plurality of layers of substantially non-porous material is selected from the group consisting of: silicon oxide; a metal film; an inorganic solid; aluminum; beryllium; chemical vapor deposited silicon oxide; and a solid with a melting point of greater than approximately 500 degrees Celsius.

13. The method for preventing thermally induced outgassing and electron stimulated desorption of contaminants from a matrix structure in a flat panel display device as recited in claim 7 wherein step a) comprises:

covering said matrix structure with a layer of substantially non-porous material having a thickness sufficient to prevent penetration therethrough by electrons emitted from a cathode portion of said flat panel display.

14. The method for preventing thermally induced outgassing and electron stimulated desorption of contaminants from a matrix structure in a flat panel display device as recited in claim 7 wherein step a) comprises:

covering said matrix structure with a contaminant prevention structure which does not outgas contaminants when struck by electrons emitted from a cathode portion of said flat panel display.

15. The method for preventing thermally induced outgassing and electron stimulated desorption of contaminants from a matrix structure in a flat panel display device as recited in claim 7 further comprising the step of:

b) applying a conductive coating over said contaminant prevention structure.

16. The method for preventing thermally induced outgassing and electron stimulated desorption of contaminants from a matrix structure in a flat panel display device as recited in claim 15 wherein step b) comprises:

applying a conductive coating comprised of a low atomic number material over said contaminant prevention structure.

17. The method for preventing thermally induced outgassing and electron stimulated desorption of contaminants from a matrix structure in a flat panel display device as recited in claim 7 wherein step a) further comprises:

covering sub-pixels regions of said flat panel display device with said contaminant prevention structure.

18. The encapsulated matrix structure of claim 1 wherein said structure is for preventing contamination caused by electron and X-ray stimulated desorption of contaminants, said contaminant prevention structure having a physical structure such that said matrix structure is substantially shielded from electron and X-ray bombardment.

19. The encapsulated matrix structure of claim 1 wherein said structure is for preventing contamination caused by thermally induced outgassing and electron and X-ray stimulated desorption of contaminants, said contaminant prevention structure further comprising:

a layer of substantially non-porous material, and

a layer of porous material.

20. The encapsulated matrix structure of claim 4, 18 or 19 wherein said matrix structure is comprised of a photosensitive polyimide formulation containing components other than polyimide.
21. The encapsulated matrix structure of claim 18 or 19 wherein said contaminant prevention structure has a thickness sufficient to substantially prevent penetration therethrough by electrons and X-rays generated within said flat panel display.
22. The encapsulated matrix structure of claim 18 or 19 wherein said contaminant prevention structure does not outgas contaminants when struck by electrons and X-rays generated within said flat panel display.
23. The encapsulated matrix structure of claim 19 wherein said contaminant prevention structure is further comprised of:
- a layer of indium tin oxide disposed over said matrix structure;
 - a layer of silicon oxide disposed over said layer of indium tin oxide; and
 - a layer of aluminum disposed over said layer of silicon oxide.
24. The encapsulated matrix structure of claim 23 wherein said layer of indium tin oxide has a thickness of approximately 1000-10,000 angstroms.
25. The encapsulated matrix structure of claim 23 wherein said layer of silicon oxide has a thickness of approximately 3000-10,000 angstroms.
26. The encapsulated matrix structure of claim 23 wherein said layer of aluminum has a thickness of approximately 300-4000 angstroms.

27. A field emission display device comprising:
- a) a faceplate;
 - b) a backplate coupled to said faceplate;
 - c) a physical component disposed between said faceplate and said backplate; and
 - d) a contaminant prevention structure disposed covering said physical component, said contaminant prevention structure preventing thermal outgassing and electron desorption of contaminants from said physical component.
28. The field emission display device of claim 27 wherein said physical component is a black matrix structure.
29. The field emission display device of claim 27 wherein said physical component is a support structure.
30. The field emission display device of claim 27 wherein said physical component is a focus structure.
31. The device of claim 1, 2, 4, 18, 19 or 27 wherein said physical component is comprised of polyimide.
32. The structure or device of claim 1, 2, 4 or 27 wherein said contaminant prevention structure is comprised of at least one layer of substantially non-porous material.
33. The encapsulated matrix structure of claim 19 or 32 wherein said substantially non-porous material is selected from the group consisting of: a metal film; an inorganic solid; aluminum; beryllium; and a solid with a melting point of greater than approximately 500 degrees

Celsius.

34. The encapsulated matrix structure of claim 32 wherein said substantially non-porous material is selected from the group consisting of : silicon oxide; a metal film; and an inorganic solid.

35. The structure or device of claim 18 or 27 wherein said contaminant prevention structure is comprised of at least one layer of substantially porous material.

36. The encapsulated matrix structure of claim 35 wherein said contaminant prevention structure is comprised of a plurality of layers of porous material, wherein at least one of said plurality of layers of porous material is selected from the group consisting of: colloidal silica; silicon oxide; and chemical vapor deposited silicon oxide.

37. The encapsulated matrix structure of claim 19 or 35 wherein said substantially non-porous material is selected from the group consisting of : colloidal silica; silicon oxide; and chemical vapor deposited silicon oxide.

38. The field emission display device of claim 27 wherein said contaminant prevention structure is comprised of:
a layer of substantially porous material; and
a layer of substantially non-porous material coupled to said layer of substantially porous material.

39. The field emission display device of claim 27 wherein said contaminant prevention structure is comprised of a layer of substantially porous material impregnated with other material.

40. The field emission display device of claim 27 wherein said contaminant prevention structure is comprised of a layer of substantially porous material impregnated with substantially non-porous material.
41. The field emission display device of claim 19, 27, 35 or 40 further comprising:
e) a conductive coating disposed covering said contaminant prevention structure.
42. The encapsulated matrix structure of claim 4 or 41 wherein said conductive coating is comprised of a low atomic number material.
43. The field emission display device of claim 1, 2, 4, 18, 19, 27 or 41 wherein said contaminant prevention structure is disposed in sub-pixel regions of said field emission display device.
44. The field emission display device of claim 43 wherein said contaminant prevention structure includes a dye material such that display contrast is improved by the reduction of reflected ambient light.
45. The field emission display device of claim 44 wherein said contaminant prevention structure is comprised of silicon oxide doped with said dye material.

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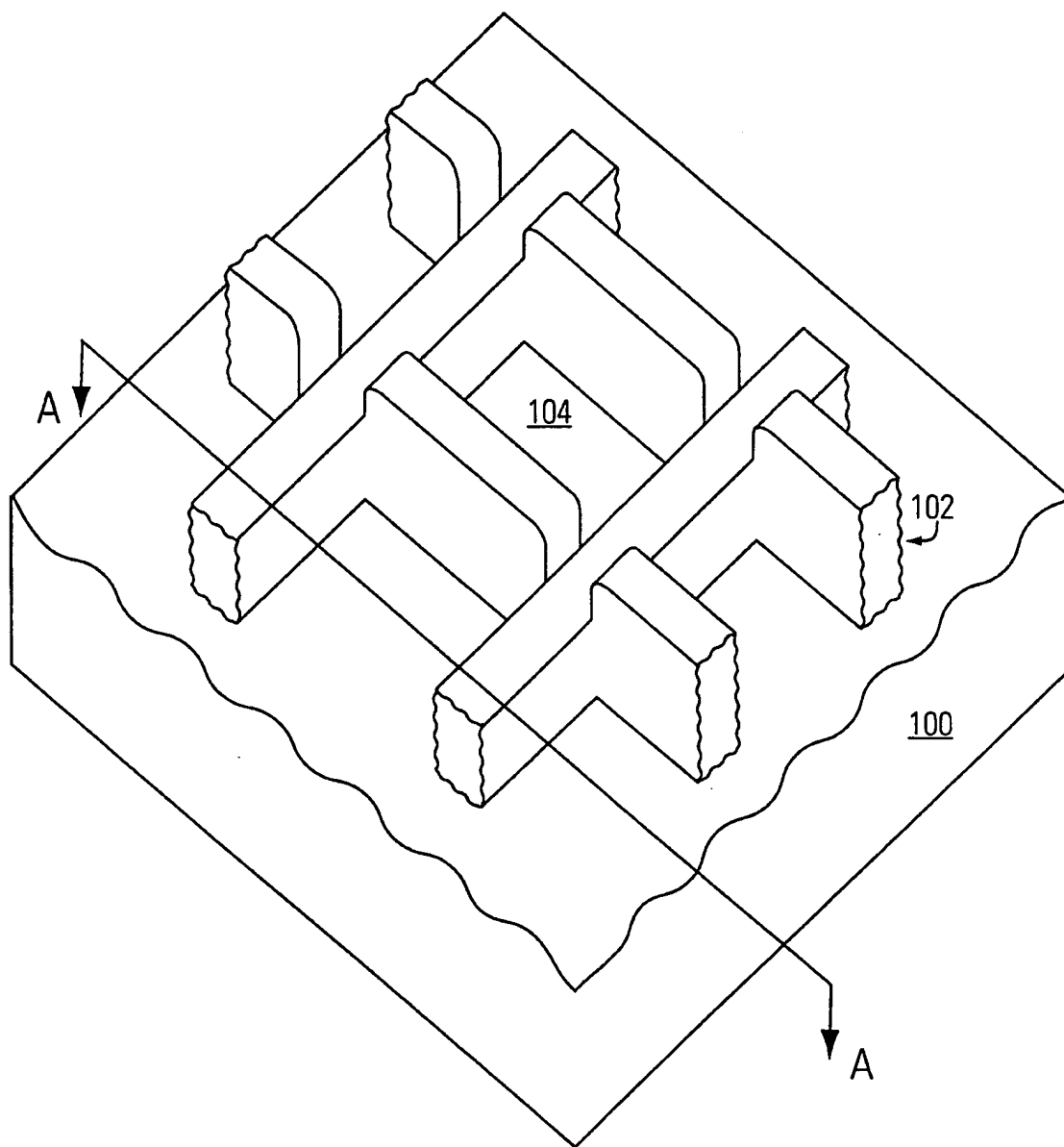


FIG. 1A

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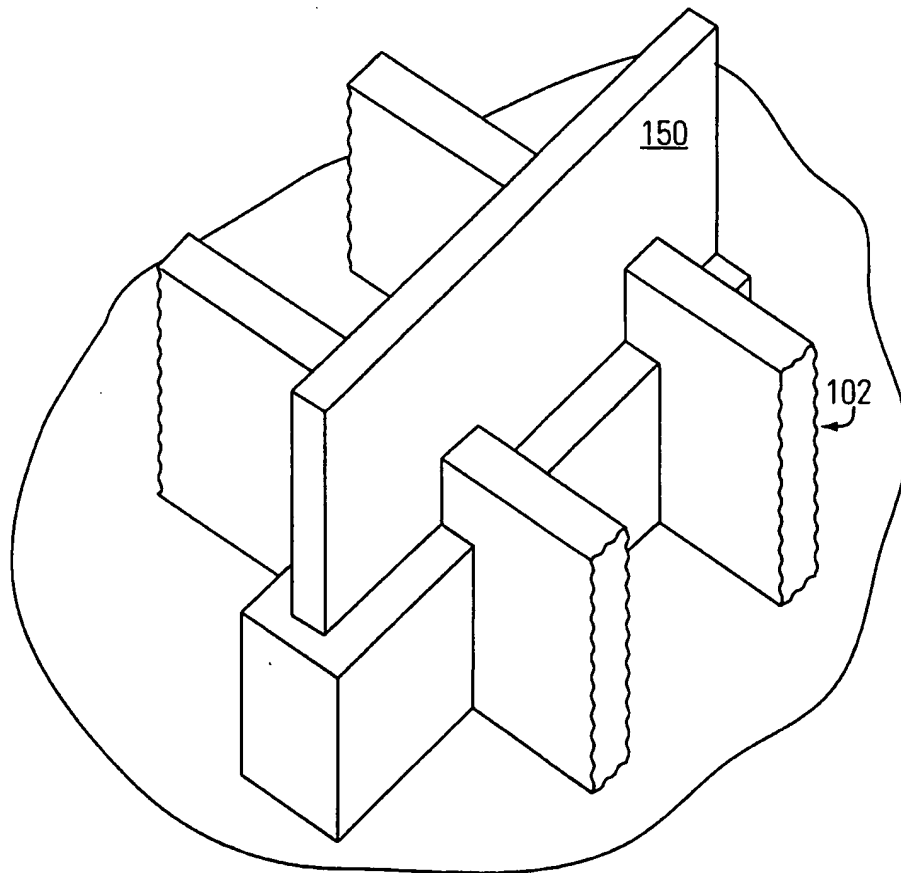


FIG. 1B

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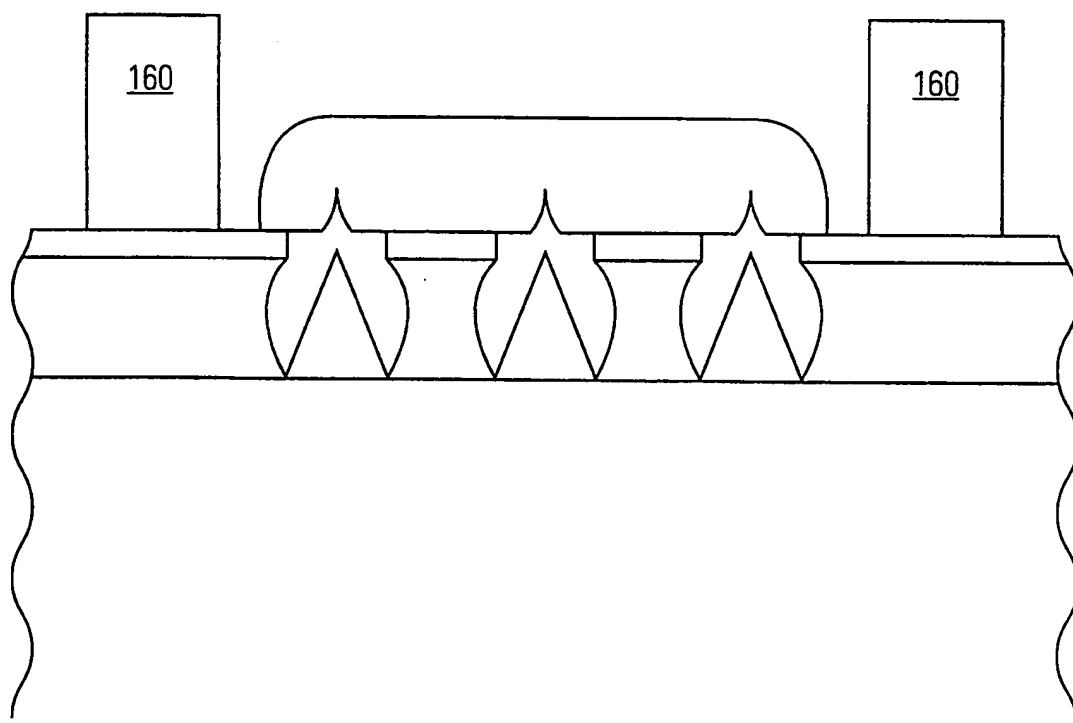


FIG. 1C

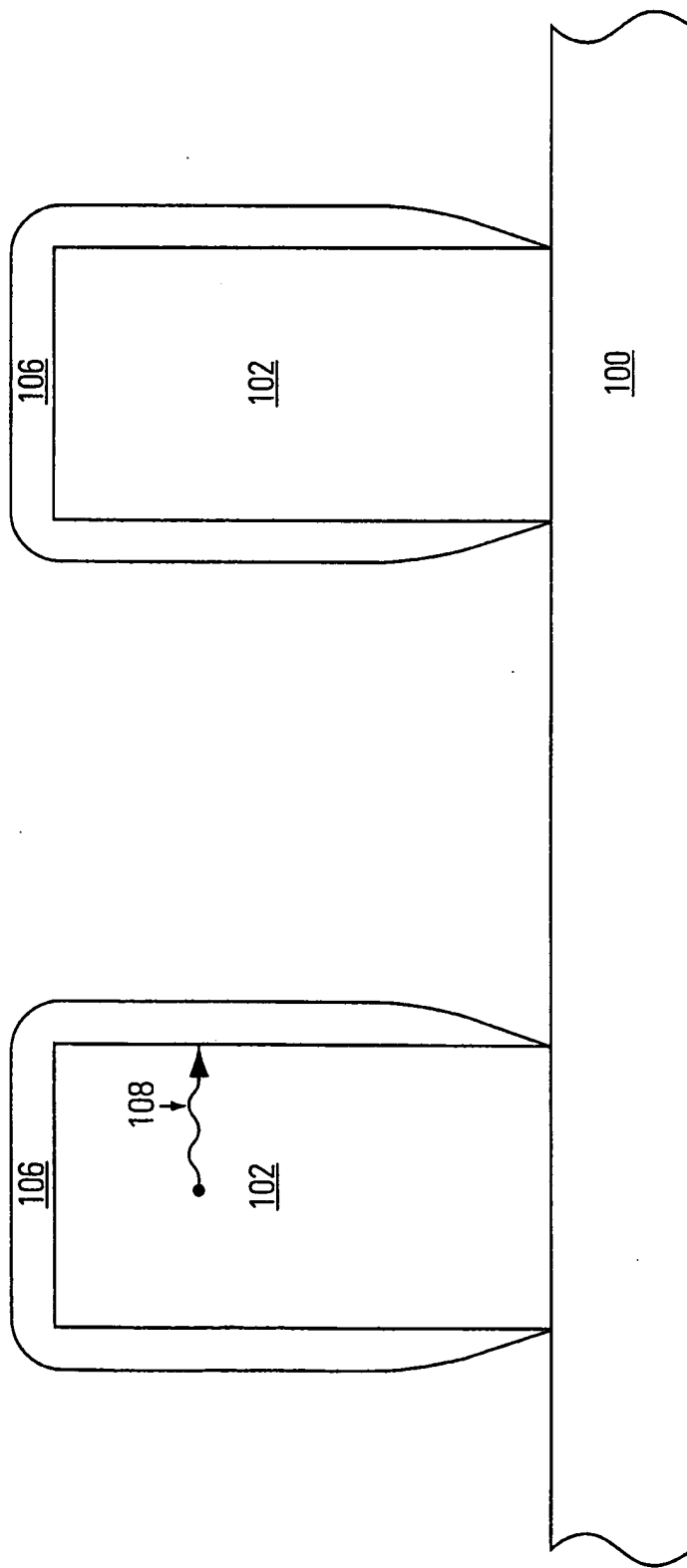


FIG. 2

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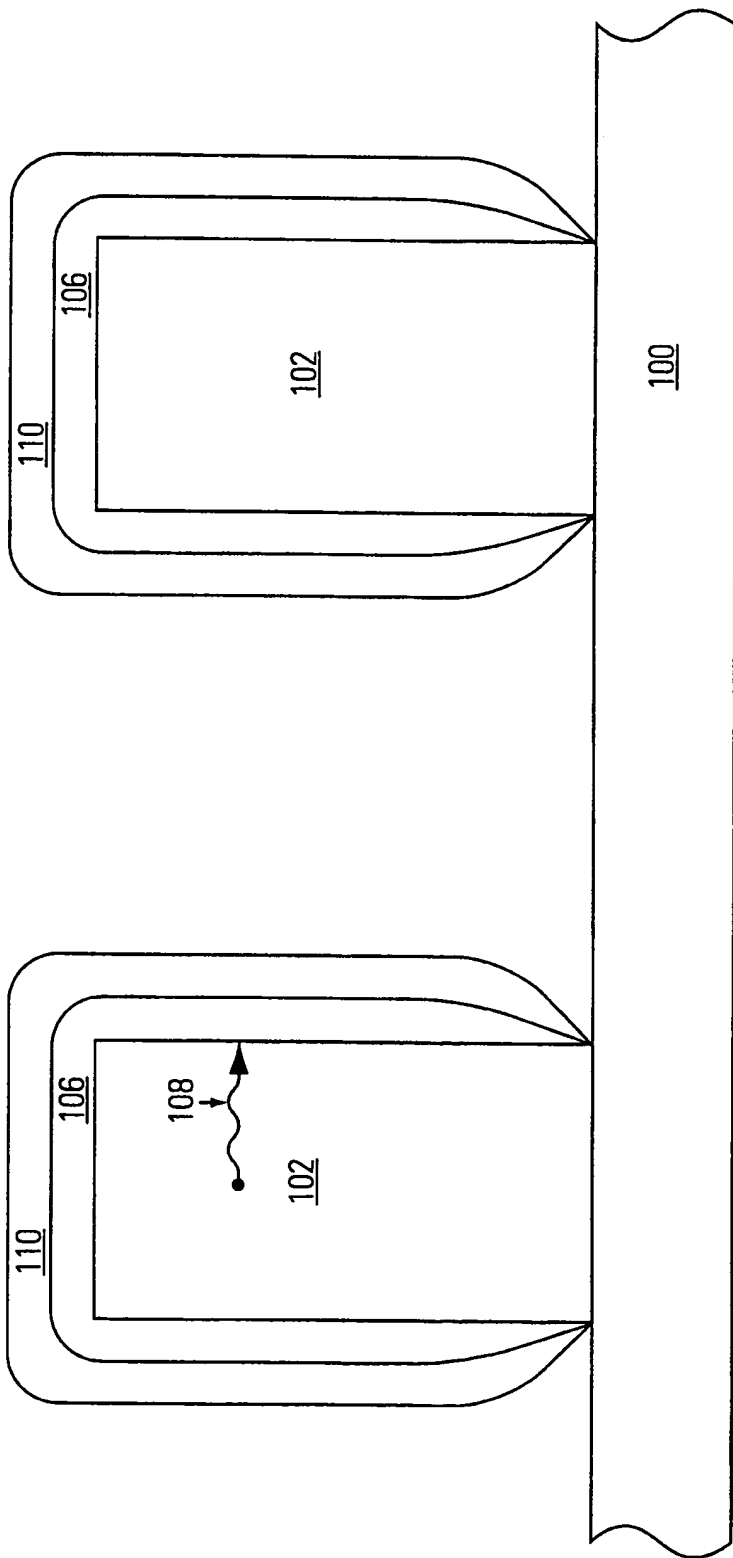


FIG. 3

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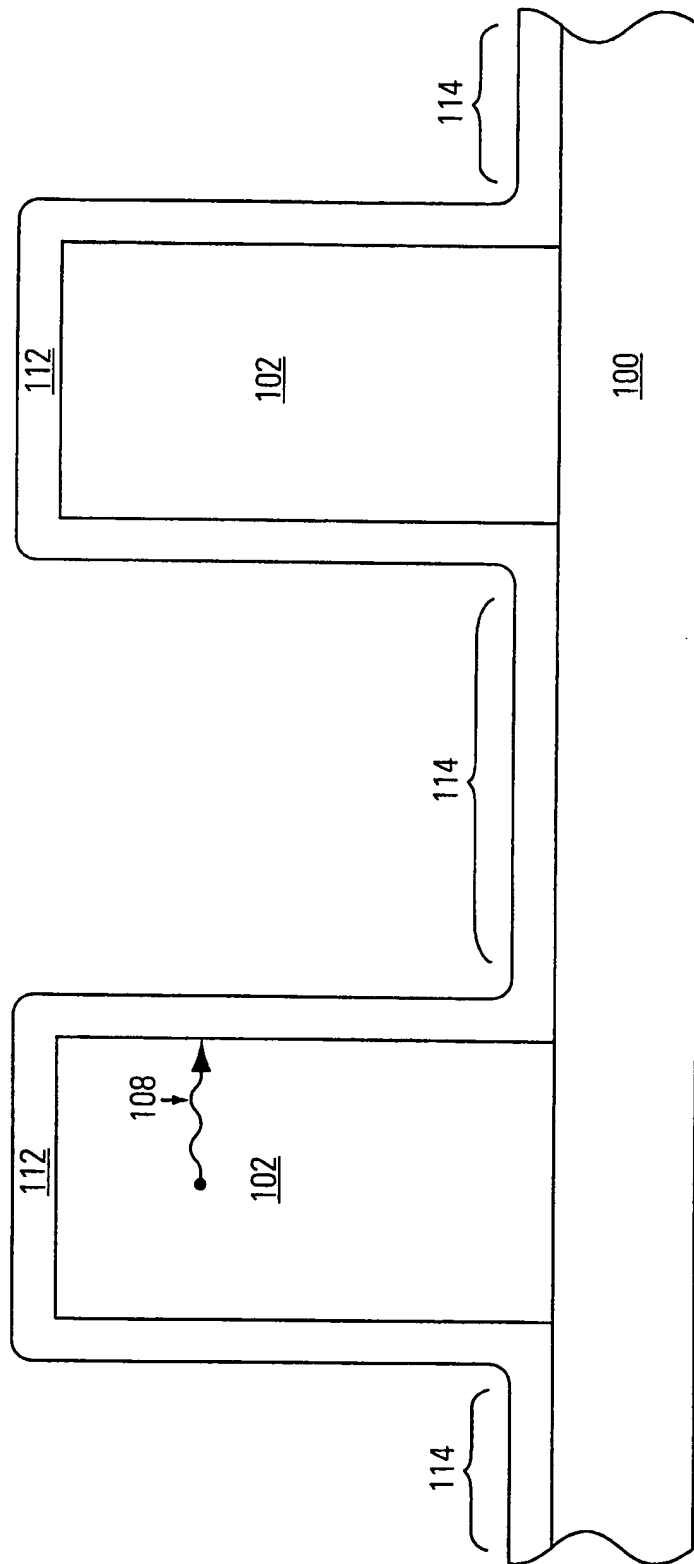


FIG. 4

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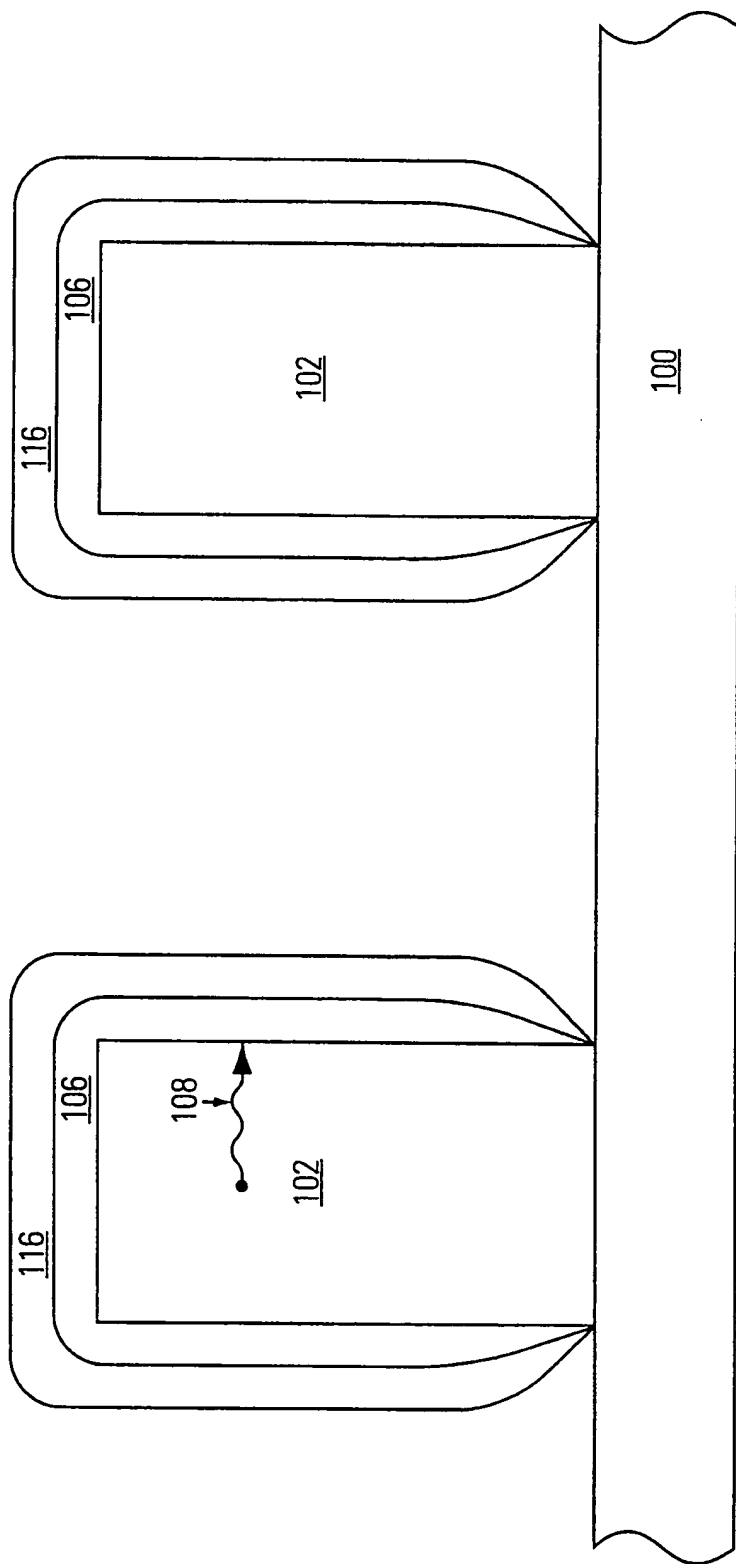


FIG. 5A

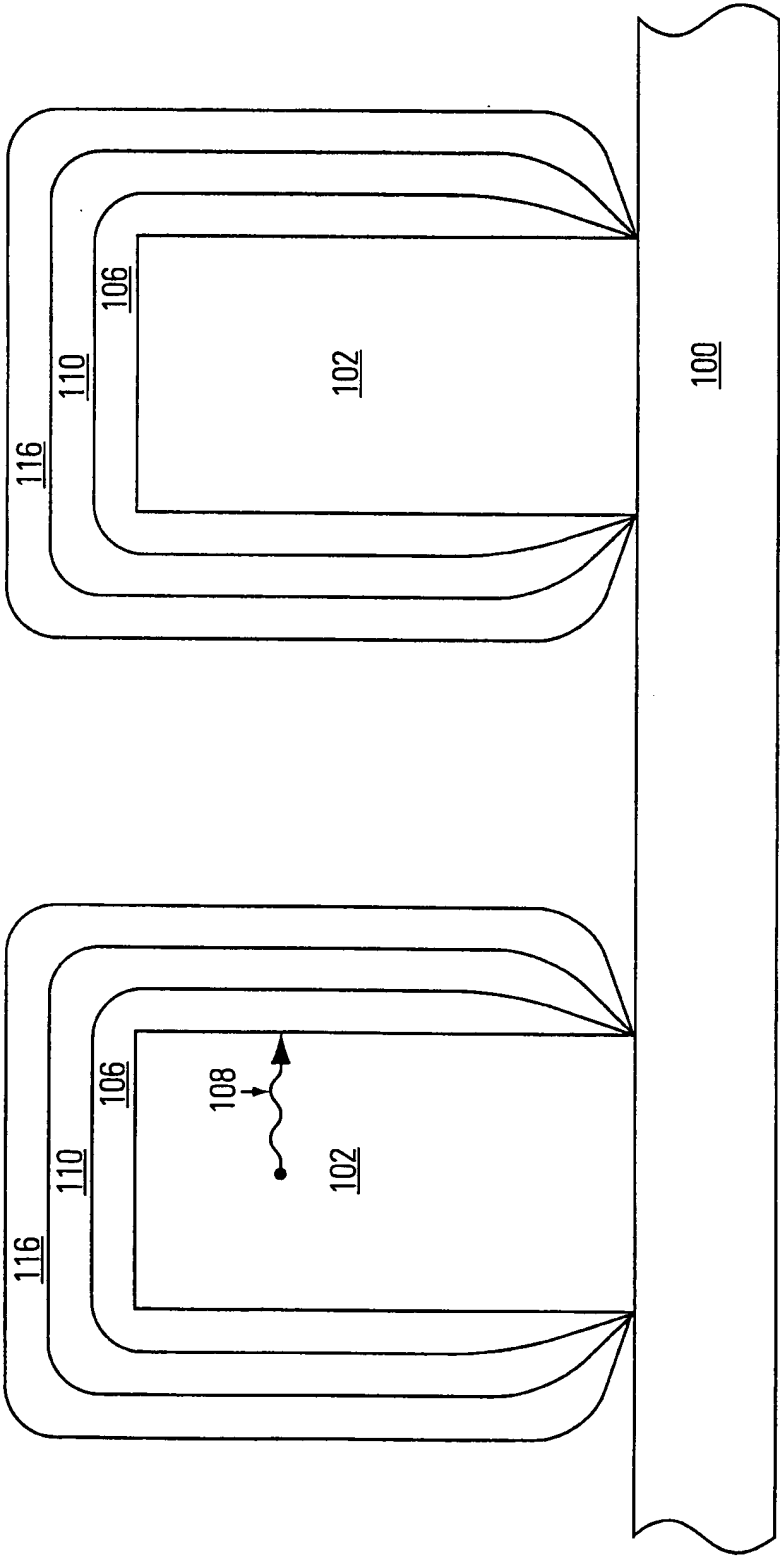


FIG. 5B

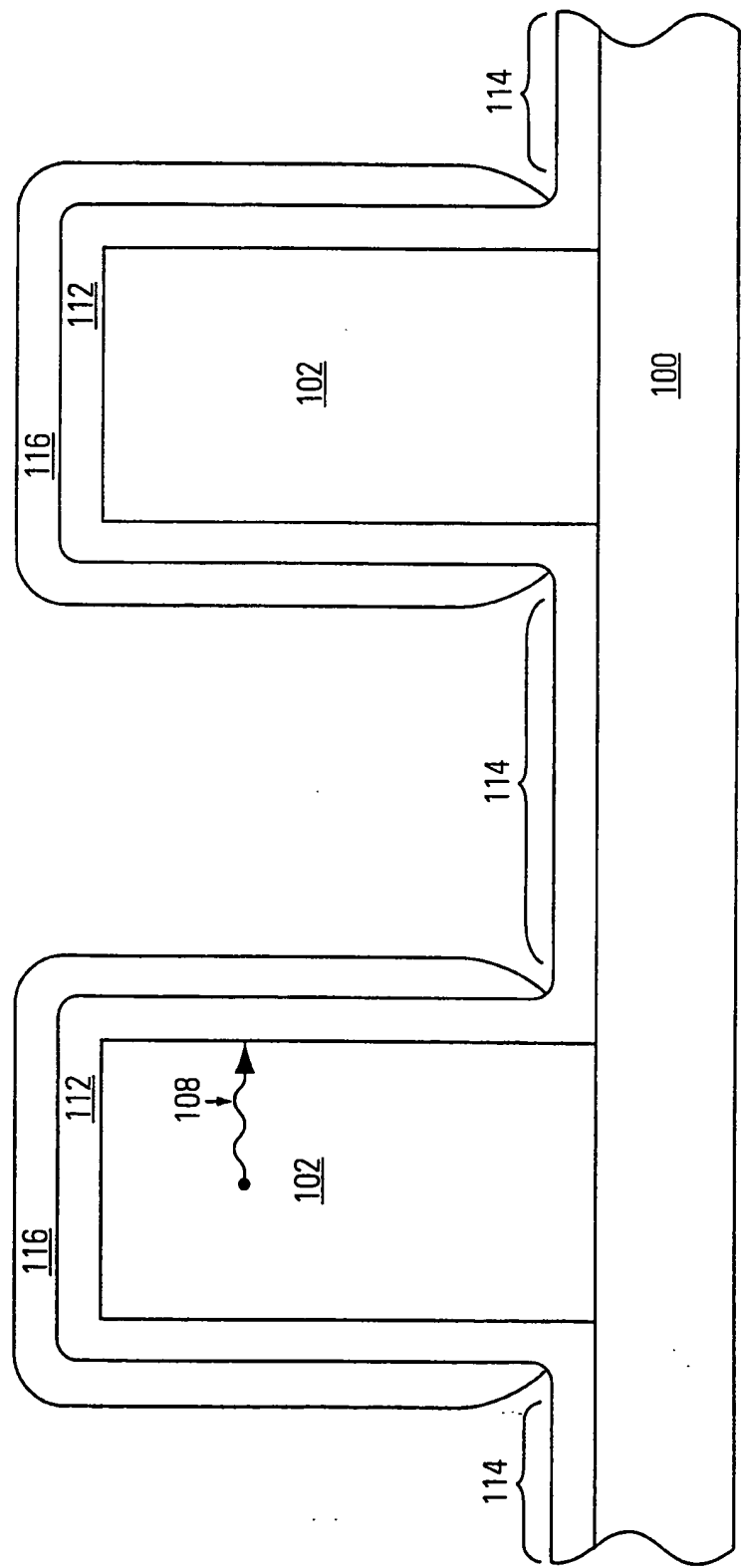


FIG. 5C

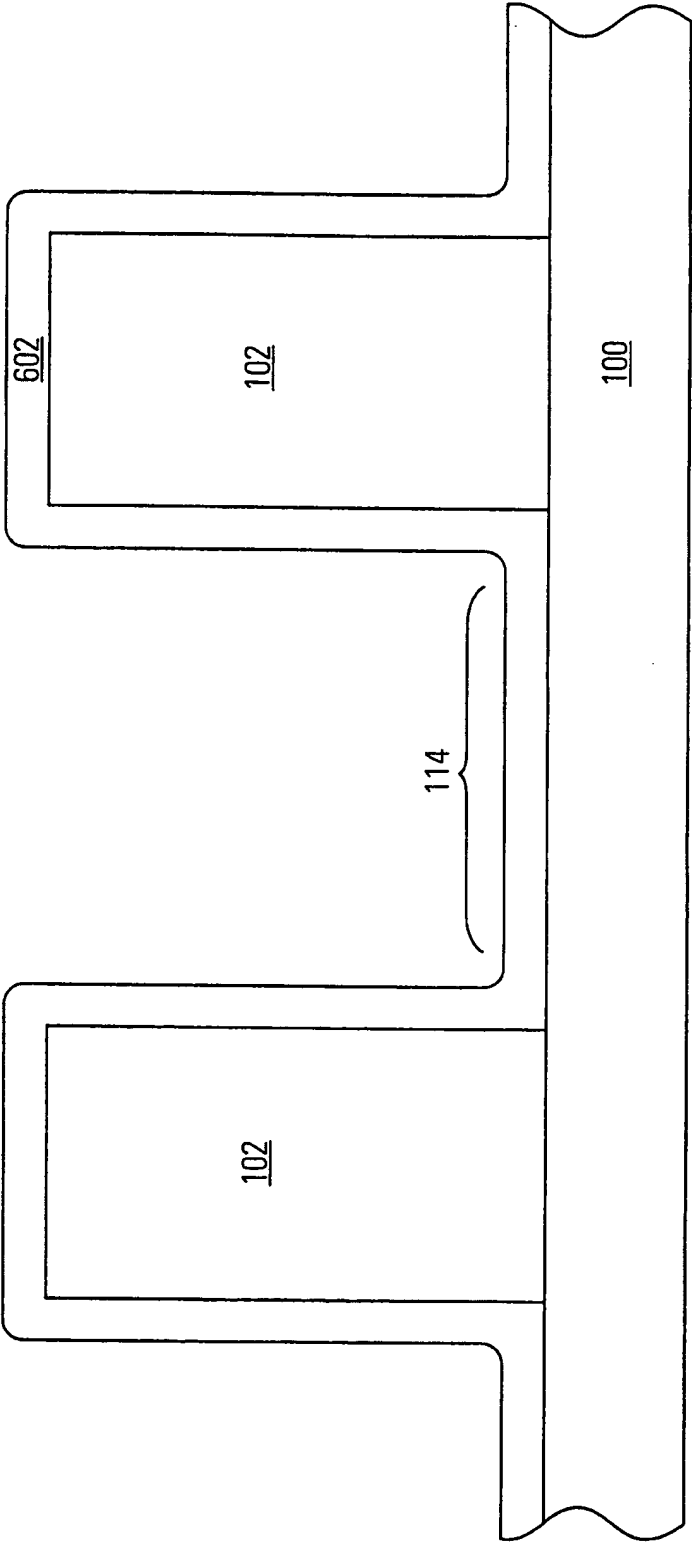


FIG. 6A

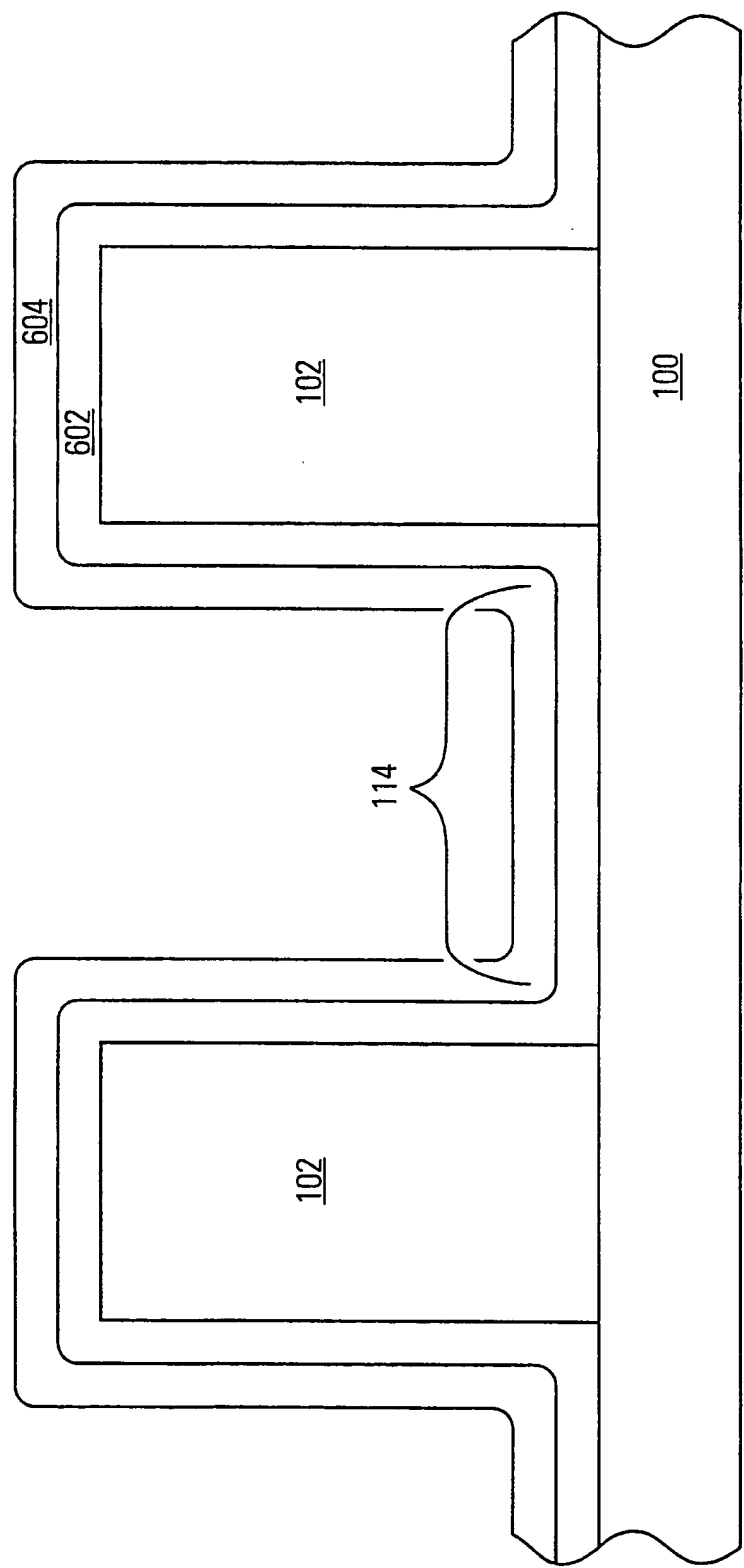


FIG. 6B

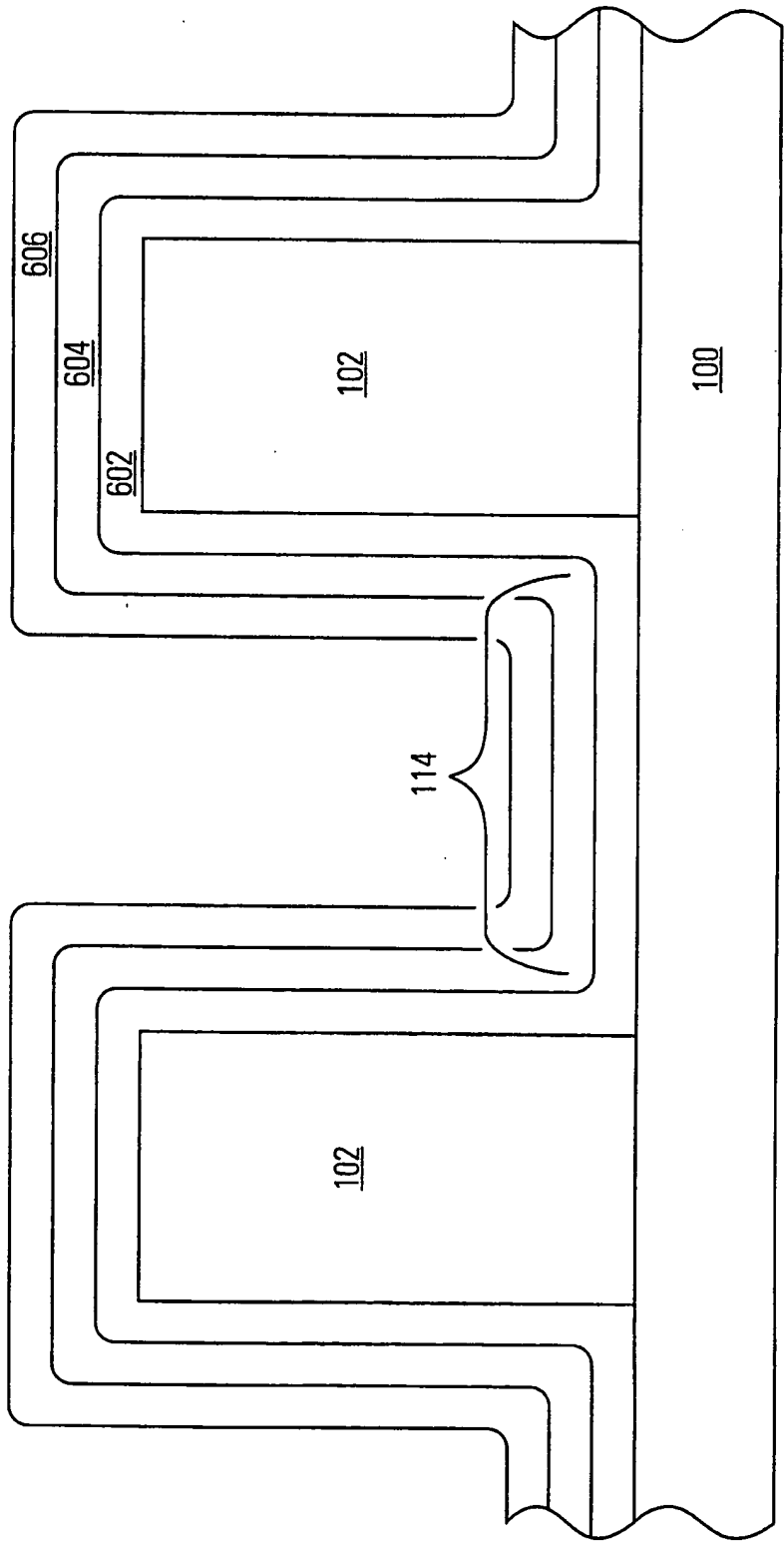


FIG. 6C

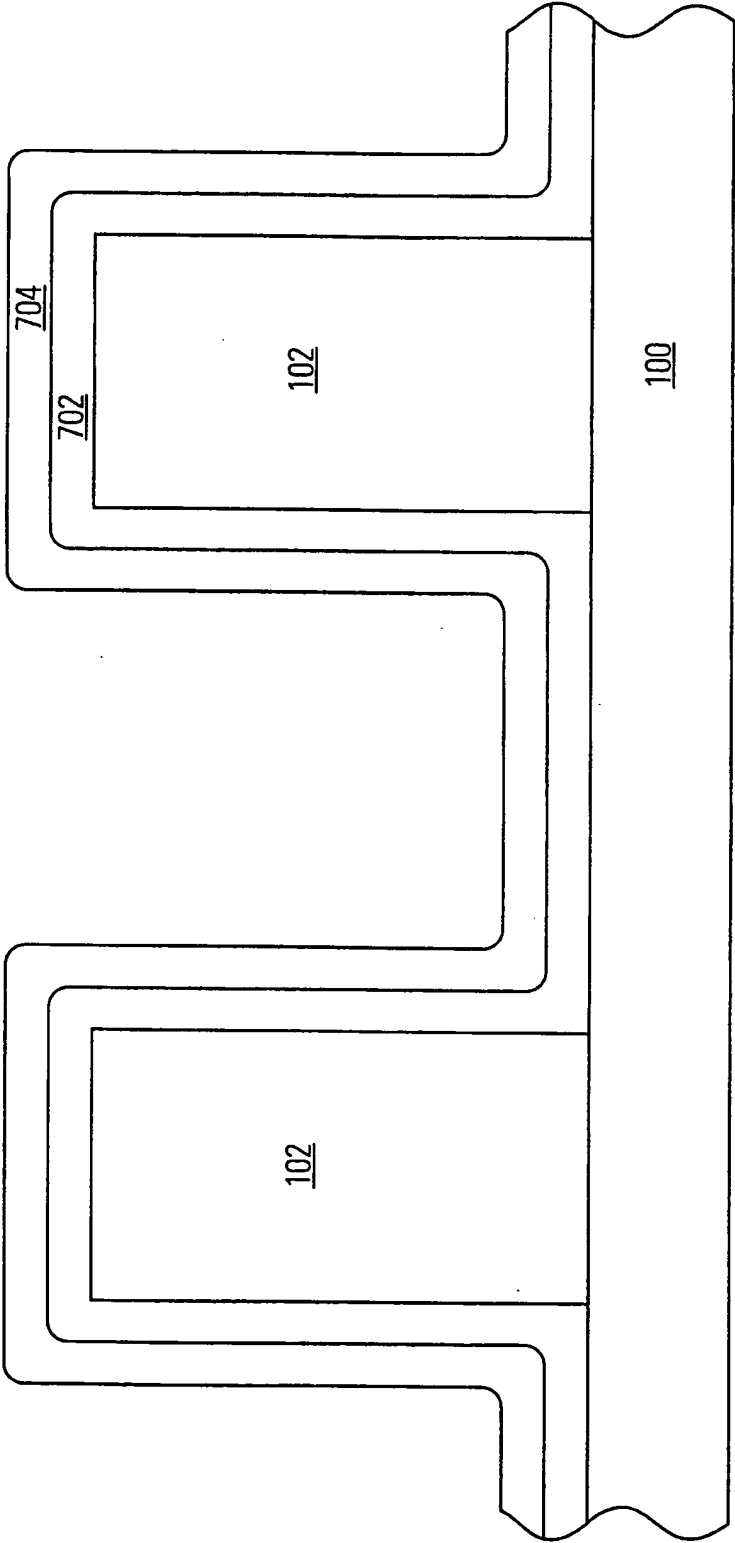


FIG. 7A

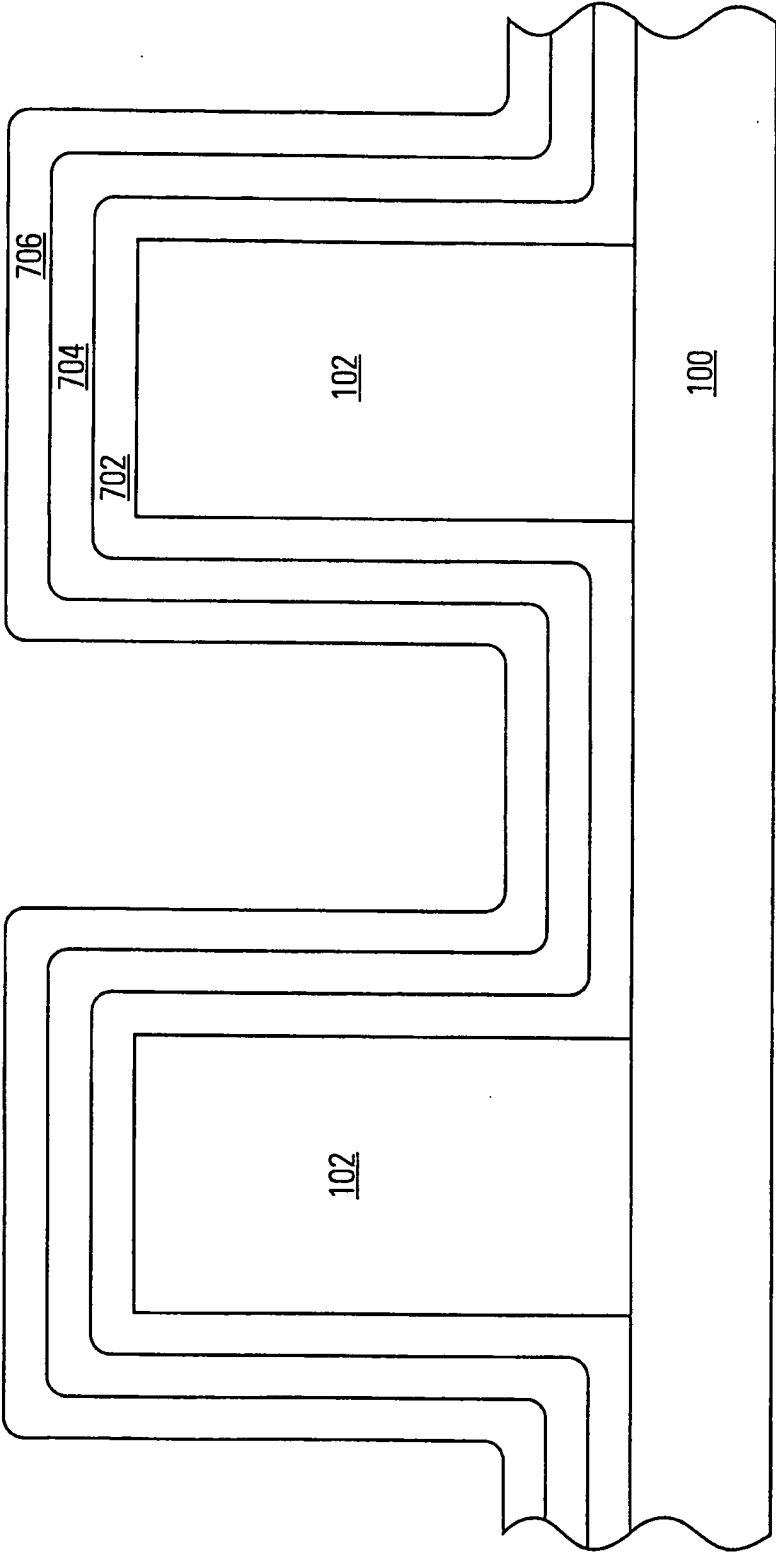


FIG. 7B

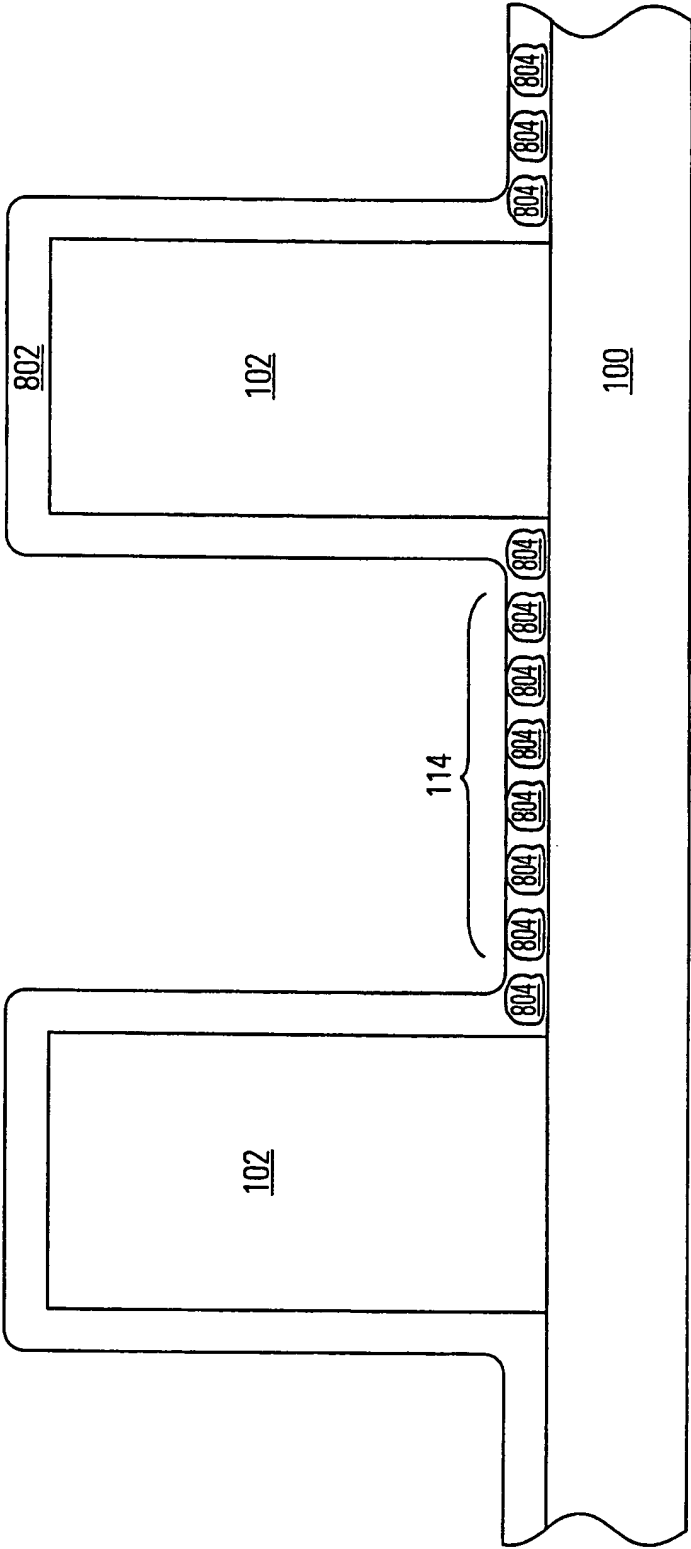


FIG. 8

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US99/11170

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(6) :H01J 5/48, H01J 5/08

US CL :313/495

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 313/495, 584-586, 491, 485; 445/25, 26

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US 5,808,413 A (Bongaerts et al.) 15 September 1998 (15.09.98) abstract, col. 6, lines 42-65, col. 7, lines 39-43.	1-29, 31-34, 36-37, 40-45
Y	US 5,663,611 A (Seats et al.) 02 September 1997 (02.09.97) FIG. 2, 3, and col. 3, lines 36-44.	1-29, 31-34, 36-37, 40-45
A	US 5,336,121 A (BARET) 09 August 1994 (09.08.94) col.3, lines 35-44, col. 4, lines 60-63, col. 5, lines 41-44.	39, 44, 45
A	US 5,746,635 A (SPINDT et al.) 05 May 1998 (05.05.98) FIG. 9B and respective portions of the specification.	1

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. ☐ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"E" earlier document published on or after the international filing date	"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"&" document member of the same patent family
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

Date of the actual completion of the international search

30 SEPTEMBER 1999

Date of mailing of the international search report

29 OCT 1999

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